



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

VOL. XXIV.

BALTIMORE, JUNE, 1909.

No. 6.

NOTES ON BROWNING.

THE SOURCE OF *Christmas Eve* — *Saul* — THE TITLE, *Men and Women* — *Pauline*.

Last year I pointed out (*Independent*, 14 May, 1908) that in a letter to Elizabeth Barrett, 16 August, 1846, Robert Browning definitely if unconsciously, made a sketch which was later strictly followed in the poem *Christmas Eve* (published 1 April, 1850). Miss Barrett had written to him the day before a remarkable letter in which she commented on the various forms of religious worship from Roman Catholicism to Unitarianism. She said, "Wherever you go, in all religious societies, there is a little to revolt, and a good deal to bear with—but it is not otherwise in the world without; and, *within*, you are especially reminded that God has to be more patient than yourself after all. Still you go quickest there, where your sympathies are least ruffled and disturbed—and I like, beyond comparison best, the simplicity of the dissenters . . . the unwritten prayer, . . . the sacraments administered quietly and without charlatanism! and the principle of a church, as they hold it, *I* hold it too, . . . quite apart from state necessities . . . pure from the law." She then goes on to point out unpleasant things in non-conformist worship—"you feel moreover bigotry and ignorance pressing on you on all sides, till you gasp for breath like one strangled. But better this, even, than what is elsewhere." (*Letters*, Harper edition, II, 427.)

To this letter Browning replied, "I know your very meaning, in what you said of religion, and responded to it with my whole soul—what you express now, is for us both . . . those are my own feelings, my convictions beside—instinct confirmed by reason. . . . If in a meeting house, with the blank white walls, and a simple doctrinal exposition—all the senses should turn (from where they lie neglected) to all that sunshine in the Sistine with its music and painting, which would lift

them at once to Heaven,—why should you not go forth?—to return just as quickly, when they are nourished into a luxuriance that extinguishes, what is called, Reason's pale wavering light, lamp or whatever it is. . . . See the levity! No—this sort of levity only exists because of the strong conviction, I do believe! There seems no longer need of earnestness in assertion, or proof . . . so it runs lightly over, like foam on the top of a wave." (*Letters*, II, 434.)

Observe that in his letter Browning in imagination attends a simple bare meeting-house, from which he flies to the church of Rome, and then back to the meeting-house; and this is exactly (with the German interlude) what happens in the poem *Christmas Eve*, and for precisely the same reasons. Furthermore in the poem, he definitely chooses the meeting-house, with all its stupidity, in preference to other forms of worship—"I choose here!" Again, he makes at the end of the poem, exactly the same defense of what might seem to others levity, that he makes in his letter:

And if any blames me,
Thinking that merely to touch in brevity
The topics I dwell on, were unlawful,—
Or, worse, that I trench, with undue levity,
On the bounds of the Holy and the awful,
I praise the heart, and pity the head of him,
And refer myself to *THEE*, instead of him;
Who head and heart alike discernest,
Looking below light speech we utter,
When the frothy spume and frequent sputter
Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest!
—*Christmas Eve*, first edition, Section XXII.

Compare the last two lines with the last line of letter, quoted above.

These facts seem to me to prove two things, first—that the poem *Christmas Eve* sprang directly from this correspondence. Secondly—that *Christmas Eve* is not primarily a dramatic poem, as many have claimed, but that it is the deliberate expression of Browning's own religious convictions. This has been denied by some authorities, and questioned by others (see Ethel M. Naish, *Browning and Dogma*, London, 1906, and Professor Cun-

liffe's excellent article in *Modern Language Publications*, June, 1908). In view of what I have directly quoted from Browning's letter above, I cannot agree with Professor Cunliffe, when he says of Browning's reply to Miss Barrett's letter, "like a wise lover he concurs without saying anything definite on his own side, beyond the safe: 'What you express now is for us both.' " It appears to me that he was quite definite, very different indeed (for example) from the way in which Faust dodged Margaret's point-blank question, *Glaubst du an Gott?*

A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF *Saul*.

One of my undergraduate students, Mr. Paul Moore of New York City, called my attention last year to a poem by Dr. John Brown (1715-1766), *The Cure of Saul* (London, 1763), which he came across in a miscellany. I find two copies of the earliest editions of this book in the Yale Library, one with the plain text, the other, "as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden," with directions for singing. Mr. Moore thinks that it is at least possible that Browning had read this poem and taken a hint from it in composing his own work, and I am inclined to agree with him. Dr. Brown was not much of a poet, for in his verses declamation roared while passion slept. Yet there is one passage in *Saul* where Browning uses the splendid figure of the rocky side of the mountain revealed after the Spring snow-slide, that might have been inspired by Dr. Brown. In the latter's version, David sings of the processes of Creation from primeval chaos to light and life, while

"In dumb surprise the list'ning Monarch lay."

Then

"Ocean hastens to his Bed :
The lab'ring Mountain rears his rock-encumber'd Head :
Down his steep and shaggy Side
The Torrent rolls his thund'ring Tide."

In Browning, we read

"Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right
to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held
(he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a
broad bust of stone

A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,—leaves
grasp of the sheet?

Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to
his feet."

Incidentally, we may note that the *Dictionary of National Biography* miscalls Dr. Brown's work "The Curse of Saul."

THE TITLE, "MEN AND WOMEN."

While teaching Browning's *Men and Women* in the University of California last summer, Mr. John B. Alexander, of Honolulu, suggested to me that possibly Browning might have taken the title, *Men and Women*, from the *Mimes* of Sophron. In Nairn's edition of the *Mimes of Herodas*, Oxford, 1904, page xxiii, we find, "he wrote two kinds of *μίμοι*, called *ἀνδρεῖοι* and *γυναικεῖοι*; . . . The subjects of these pieces were drawn from the world of ordinary men and women." Nairn refers in a footnote to Suidas, who said of Sophron, *ἔγραψε μίμους ἀνδρείους καὶ μίμους γυναικείους*. Mr. Alexander says, "Browning, who had much out of the way knowledge, might have adapted the above expression as the title of his *Men and Women*, his poems being far off descendants of the mime." This seems to me at least possible, as Browning delighted in reading just such things as the above. Yet it is also barely possible that Browning took the title from a statement that Richardson made just before the appearance of *Grandison*; he said, "the subjects are still the same [as in *Pamela* and *Clarissa*] love and nonsense, men and women."

THE TEXT OF *Pauline*.

There are really three separate texts of *Pauline*; the first edition of 1833, the edition of 1868, with misprints corrected, and the final and standard edition of 1888, with the diction thoroughly revised. In the preface to the 1868 edition of his collected works, the poet remarked that he retained *Pauline* with extreme repugnance, but was forced to print it owing to the certain appearance of transcripts. "By forestalling these, I can at least correct some misprints (no syllable is changed)." Browning of course believed that the words in the parenthesis were literally true; but they are not. I have made a

very careful collation of all three texts, which I may be able to publish some time, and it appears that besides the correction of a few misprints, there were some syllables (very few) absolutely changed; enough to make the text of 1868 a different text from that of 1833.

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS.

Yale University.

NOTES ON BAIST, GRAMMATIK DER SPANISCHEN SPRACHE,² 1906.

The following lines, in their first draught, were meant to serve as a foot-note in an article on the etymology of *duecho*. Baist, Kritischer Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der romanischen Philologie VIII, 1 p. 201, makes the statement: "*duecho* ist nur einmal handschr. bei Berceo überliefert, neben sonst einzig vorhandenem regelmässigen *ducho*." I wanted to show that such statements as "nur einmal überliefert," even when made by an authority like Baist, are generally wrong. My remarks having outgrown the space of a foot-note, I beg to publish them here separately. B. § etc. refers to Baist, Gramm. d. span. Sprache,² 1906=Gröber, Grundr.² 1 p. 878.

1. B. § 20 (p. 887): "nie [steht] *lingua*."

Munthe, Anteckningar, 1887, p. 25, observes: "*i* mot kast. *e i* *tsingua* . . . [BL (= bableliteraturen) *llingua* och *lleng.*, gal. pg. *ling.* . . .]." Menéndez Pidal, Manual,² 1905, § 11, 2: "*lingua* . . . hace en . . . ast. occid. y central *llingua*." Cf. e. g. La Olla asturiana p. 101 *llingua*. In Fuero Juzgo (1815) *lingua* occurs at least three times: pp. 67 V. L. 13 Esc. 1.; 115 V. L. 33 Bex.; ib. V. L. 34 B. R. 1.¹

2. B. § 23: "[es heisst asp.] nicht *cobdo*."

Diez, Et. Wb.⁴ 1 s. v. *Cúbito*; Gessner, Das Leonische p. 10; Menéndez Pidal, op. cit. § 60, 1, claim an Old Spanish *cobdo*. Instances of *cobdo*, *cobdos* are indeed not lacking. Cf. P. Cid

501. Alex. (Janer) 993 (= Morel-Fatio 1021). Fuero de Sepúlveda pp. 67; 94; 105. Espejo (1836) pp. 116; 117. Siete Partidas (1807) 1 p. 159. Prim. Crón. Gen. p. 598 a 18. Libros de Astr. 1 pp. 23; 25; 29; 30; 37; 53. 11 pp. 284; 285. Carlos Maynes (Bonilla) p. 514a. Corvacho (Pérez Pastor) p. 143. In 1534, Valdés, Diál. de la lengua (Böhmer) p. 368, 19, writes: "M[arcio]. Veo en vuestras cartas que en algunos vocablos poneis b donde otros no la ponen, y decis *cobdiciar cobdo dubda subdito*; querria saber porque lo hazeis assi. V[aldés]. Porque a mi ver los vocablos estan mas llenos y mejores con la b que sin ella y porque toda mi vida los he escrito y pronunciado con b."

Cf. also *cobdal* < *cubitale*. S. Domingo (Sanchez) 490 *truchas cobdales*.³ Siete Partidas 1 p. 159 *palo cobdal, que se entiende por de un cobdo en luengo*.

3. B. § 29: "*Fidem* [ist] nur *fed fe* überliefert."

Of the forms *fee*, Tratados de Cabreros (1206) (Esp. Sagr. xxxvi Apend. pp. cxxxiii; cxxxv; cxxxvii) etc., *fey*, Fuero Juzgo p. 60 V. L. 23 Esc. 5. and similar phenomena I shall treat on another occasion.

4. B. § 60: "Alt *la pro*." More categorically Krit. Jahresber. iv (1898-1900) 1 p. 301: "*la pro* (nur so altspan.)." Cf. also Krit. Jahresber. viii, 1. Heft (Dec. 1906) 1 p. 198.

This error has been corrected, in the meantime, by Hanssen, Sobre un Compendio de Gramática castellana anteclassica, Santiago de Chile, 1908, p. 12. Hanssen quotes *pro g. m.* from P. Cid (add 1112 *en nuestro pro*), Berceo, the Bible, Prim. Crón. Gen. (add p. 77a 41 *pro ninguno*), Lucanor, Don Quixote, in the whole fourteen cases. But the instances are much more numerous. Cf. Alex. 358 *el proe* (-1) (= M.-F. 366 *el pro*); 400 item (= M.-F. 408 *el pro*); 719 *Algun proe* (+1) (= M.-F. 746 *algun proe*); Fuero Juzgo pp. 7a *Del pro, ó del danno*; 20a *Del pro ó del dampno*; 21a *el pro y danno*; 147 V. L. 6 Toled. and Malp. 2. *el pro* (Text *la pro*); 153b *el pro* (cf. also V. L. 21). Boc. Oro pp. 87 *el pro e el*

¹ Contrary to Menéndez Pidal, I do not believe that the *i* in *viuda*, *mingua*, *lingua* is due to *umlaut*.

² How does this statement agree with the one in § 52 (p. 905) concerning Leonese *coldo*? Does not *coldo* presuppose *cobdo* just as *delda*—*debda* etc.?

³ Fitz-Gerald, in his edition, writes with ms. E *cabdales*. Ms. V (Sanchez) is here, as in other cases (cf. p. xxix), preferable.